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Ephesus, 431-1931

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In view of the fact that the year just past was the fifteenth centenary of the condemnation of Nestorius, we reprint from the Clergy Review the following article written by the Lecturer in Philosophy at the Queen's University of Belfast. As we go to press, the newspapers report that the Pope is about to issue an Encyclical on the same subject.

NOT the least useful purpose of the centenary celebrations which the Church holds from year to year is to remind us what an immense wealth of historical incident and of theological controversy lies behind the simplest formulae of our Catechisms and the crisp phrases of our daily prayers. And there could be no better example of the influence of past events on our devotional life than the Council of Ephesus, the fifteenth centenary of which the Holy Father has called upon us to commemorate. Every Catholic every day of his life as he fingers his rosary and asks the prayers of "Holy Mary, Mother of God," owes a debt to the Catholic bishops of fifteen centuries ago. To recall then the controversy which culminated in the condemnation of Nestorius at Ephesus in 431 is both an act of obedience to His Holiness and a refreshing of our devotions.

But it is more. In spite of the edicts of the Council, in spite of the evidence of history, there have not been wanting in our own days those who wish to undo the work of Ephesus, who uphold the orthodoxy of Nestorius, and make of Ephesus an argument against the infallibility of the Church. When in 1905 Loofs published his *Nestoriana*, he found many to agree with his opinion that "the pretensions of Nestorius to orthodoxy were more justified than those of his adversary Cyril." Then came the recovery of a lost work of Nestorius which for a time divided the critics of the twentieth century as sharply as its author divided the bishops of the fifth. It was a Syrian work, the *Tegourta Héraclidis*, the Book of Heraclides of Damascus. It consists of an intermittent dialogue between Nestorius and a certain

Sophronius, and contains the heresiarch's criticisms of the Acts of the Council which condemned him. The book was immediately accepted, with a unanimity that is extremely rare amongst critics of early Christian literature, as being a translation of a work of Nestorius himself, or at least a compilation of his authentic notes by a disciple, Heraclides. At any rate, many critics hastened to see in it a complete vindication of Nestorius. Bethune-Baker published a long plea for his orthodoxy, dedicating it to the actual Nestorian Church, and to Nestorius himself, who he acclaims "*veritatis divinae indagator*." Harnack suggests that Nestorius actually held in advance the formula of Chalcedon. Even amongst Catholics, Duchesne is favorable to him, while painting a rather black picture of St. Cyril. It will not, of course, be possible, within the limits of an article, to enter closely into the controversy, involving as it would a critical examination of the various uses of the philosophical and theological terms around which the contest raged; but it is opportune to trace the course of the dispute at least in its main lines, and to sketch the figures of the great protagonists.

Nestorius was born in the last quarter of the fourth century, apparently of Persian parentage. Having pursued his early studies at Germanicia (now Marach), he went to the famous school of Antioch, where he followed the sermons and the lectures of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodorus of Tarsus. Later he entered the monastery of Euprepios, near Antioch, and was there ordained priest and commissioned to preach. He is described as rather small in stature, of reddish complexion, with large eyes and handsome features. He had a particularly beautiful voice; indeed Theodoret tells us that many were drawn to church for no other purpose than to listen to its lovely tones. He became one of the most celebrated orators of his time. His writings show a close acquaintance with the Scriptures, wide reading at least amongst the authors of the School of Antioch, and a great dialectical power, vitiated however, as Petavius observes, by a fatal tendency, especially fatal in the theology of the Incarnation, to confuse the abstract and the concrete.

When Sisinnius, bishop of Constantinople, died in 427, Theodosius II, the emperor, was so harassed by applications from the clergy who desired the *bonum opus*, that he de-

cided to run no risks of dissension, but to favor some stranger, illustrious in word and deed. The choice fell upon Nestorius, who was consecrated on the 10th April, 428. His zeal first showed itself in the extermination of heresy. Arians, Novatians, Quartodecimans, Macedonians—all felt the weight of his authority; and so renowned did he become as a pillar of orthodoxy that he was able to complain later: "I felt that men might more easily launch against me any calumny other than heresy."

Nevertheless he had breathed in the germs of heterodoxy at Antioch. One day, his friend and counsellor, the priest Anastasius, in a sermon preached towards the end of 428, used the words: "Let no one call Mary the Mother of God; for Mary was a human being, and it is impossible that God should be born of a human being." Nestorius listened unperturbed, and ignored the protests of the populace. In point of fact, that view was not new to him. With Theodore, one of his masters at Antioch, it was a commonplace. To refute the monophysitism of Apollinaris and to defend the two natures in Christ, the theology of Antioch taught that Mary was by nature the mother of the man (*Anthropotokos*), and the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) only by virtue of a relation. But the doctrine was new in Constantinople, and provoked violent dissent. At first Nestorius suggested as a compromise that the words *Anthropotokos* and *Theotokos* should be carefully avoided, and the word *Kristokos* (Mother of Christ) be accepted instead. But the simple faith of the people and the keener minds amongst the theologians saw that such a subterfuge involved a heresy on the mode of the union of the two natures in Christ. It split up the personality of the Word made flesh into two persons: on the one hand, the Word, subject of all the divine attributes, on the other, the Son of Mary, subject of all the human attributes. At the first signs of stubborn opposition, Nestorius had recourse to violence. He excommunicated some of the dissenting clergy, and with the support of the Emperor, had many of the monks and the laity flogged and imprisoned.

Rumors of the dispute spread abroad, finding their way to Rome, to Antioch, to Alexandria. The patriarchal see of Alexandria was then occupied by one who was destined to fill the same rôle against Nestorius as another bishop of

that see, Athanasius, had filled against Arius. Indeed the contemporaries of Cyril loved to compare him to Athanasius. Athanasius was of mediocre height, they said, slightly stooped, of pleasing countenance, with long beard and bald forehead, and fair hair slightly blanching with years. Cyril, too, was small, his modest bearing recalling Athanasius, his complexion more colored, his thick eyebrows forming an arch over his eyes, with greying hair and beard that gave him an air of imposing majesty.

Of Cyril's earlier years, practically nothing is known. He was apparently of Alexandrian origin, and his writings display a wide range of philosophical, theological and literary culture. We find him in 403 already a priest at the Synod in Constantinople which deposed St. John Chrysostom, to whom Cyril showed a pronounced antipathy. In 412 he succeeded his uncle Theophilus in the patriarchal see of Alexandria. St. Cyril has been fiercely calumniated. The bitter accusations of the partisan historian Socrates, who charges him with a massacre of Jews and with the murder of the brilliant young girl-philosopher who held the chair of Plotinus, have been woven for modern readers into Charles Kingsley's romance *Hypatia*. Harnack sees in him a willing tool for what he strangely calls the "dogmatic policy" of the old Rome, namely, to favor the claims of Alexandria as against those of the new Rome on the shores of the Hellespont. Even amongst Catholics it is not unusual to find fault with his conduct at the Council of Ephesus. But he has not lacked his defenders, like Baronius and the Bollandists; and no one who reads his letters on the Nestorian controversy can doubt that no other motive inspired him but love of truth and zeal for the salvation of souls and for the defence of the Faith.

When the news of the dispute at Constantinople reached Alexandria, Cyril immediately detected the heresy latent in Nestorius' solution. In his paschal homily of 429, without actually naming Nestorius, he warned his faithful against the error, insisting on the personal unity of Christ and on the legitimacy of the term *Theotokos*. A letter to the monks of Egypt followed, setting forth the whole Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation with admirable lucidity, again without naming Nestorius, but at the same time combating some of his actual expressions. When his letters reached

Constantinople, Nestorius was indignant. He openly attacked Cyril, whom he sneeringly called "the Egyptian." Cyril answered by addressing Nestorius directly, but Nestorius ignored him. To a second letter, Nestorius answered at length, defending his doctrine and suggesting acidly that Cyril should mind his own business. Cyril, having failed in fraternal admonition, fulfilled his plain duty by bringing the matter further. In a series of letters to St. Celestine I, the reigning Pope, to the Emperor, and to the princesses of the imperial family, he built up a veritable *dossier* of documents on the errors of Nestorius, contrasting them with the orthodox doctrine as found in the Fathers. It was the spring of 430. Celestine, to whom Nestorius had already written at length, completely endorsed the opinions of Cyril, and in August, 430, a Council of the bishops of Italy held at Rome considered the matter fully. As a result Celestine wrote to Nestorius. The tone of the letter is severe. The Pope, piercing mercilessly through the ambiguity of Nestorius' language, shows forth his error, and commands him under pain of excommunication and desposition, to withdraw, charging Cyril to carry out the decision. To a superficial observer it might seem perhaps hardly diplomatic to appoint as executor of the sentence Nestorius' great antagonist; but the Pope was fully convinced that the conduct of Cyril from the beginning had been inspired by no personal animosity; and, moreover, in vigilance and in theological prowess Cyril was the outstanding figure of the Greek Church. Moreover, it was not from Cyril that Nestorius first heard of his sentence, but from John of Antioch, to whom Celestine had also written, and who in a pleading and charitable letter begged of Nestorius to desist.

The three main centres of Christianity (Rome, Alexandria and Antioch) had now decided in favor of the *Theotokos* and of the personal unity of Christ. Nestorius' first answer (to John of Antioch) was mild and conciliatory, but he suggested a general Council, and expressed himself ready to abide by its decision. In December, 430, delegates arrived in Constantinople from Alexandria bearing a document from Cyril with twelve *anathemata* for Nestorius to sign. Cyril, in sending such a document, was acting quite within his instructions from Celestine, but it must be admitted that it was not a very courteous or conciliatory ulti-

matum. At any rate, it arrived too late. Nestorius had already appealed to Theodosius II for the convening of a general Council, and in November an imperial circular had been sent to all the metropolitans of the Empire, summoning them with their most distinguished suffragans to assemble in Ephesus at the Pentecost of the following year. The great Augustine was specially asked, but the couriers returned with the news that he was dead.

Nestorius had won the full support of Theodosius. The Emperor's letter to Cyril was full of threats. Moreover, the anathemata of Cyril contained an unfortunate expression on which Nestorius did not fail to seize. Cyril spoke of a *henosis physike*—a physical or natural union of the two natures in Christ; and on the strength of this ambiguous phrase Nestorius was able to conciliate the important figure of John of Antioch. In the meantime, Cyril had asked Rome for instructions. Celestine, with remarkable forbearance, suspended the effect of his first condemnation, and invited Nestorius to attend the Council as a bishop. Celestine himself was unable to attend, but undertook to send legates, instructing them to adhere closely to Cyril.

At the beginning of June, 431, the bishops began to arrive at Ephesus, Nestorius being amongst the first comers. Ephesus today is a miserable fever-stricken village on the shores of Asia Minor, a few hours south of Smyrna. Its modern name is Aia-solouk. But in ancient days it was the queen of Ionia. Pliny calls it "the torch of Asia." With its magnificent situation and its well-sheltered harbor, it had become one of the richest and most active ports of the Levant. When at Patmos St. John described the wealth of the Roman Empire, he probably had in mind the magazines of Ephesus. It held too the famous shrine of Artemis, the "Diana of the Ephesians," one of the seven wonders of the world, remains of which can still be seen in the Ephesus Room of the British Museum. But Christianity had brought it greater glories still. St. Paul had spread the faith there, and had honored its congregation with a letter. Timothy ruled there as bishop. St. John, the great protector of the Blessed Virgin, had chosen it as a dwelling-place, and it held his tomb. In fact its modern name is a corruption of the Greek soubriquet of St. John, *hagios theologos*. Its cathedral was the first in the world to bear

the title of Mary. It was then a fitting place for a Council that was to consider her prerogatives.

There was an unaccountable delay in the arrival of some of the bishops, especially John of Antioch and the Papal Legates, but those already arrived, impatient of the procrastinations, decided to open the Council. Three canonical appellations were made to Nestorius to appear, but he refused to come until all the bishops were assembled, and showed his contumacy by having the delegation maltreated at the hands of the imperial soldiery. Accordingly on June 22nd, a full fortnight after the date originally fixed, the Council opened, Cyril presiding. After hearing the letters of Nestorius and considering the teaching of the Fathers, the bishops unanimously anathematized him, passing sentence of excommunication and deposition. The session lasted from morning till night, and in a famous letter Cyril tells how, when the news of the decision spread abroad, the enthusiastic populace flocked to the Church, surrounded the bishops, and escorted them to their homes with torches and lanterns, while the women burned incense before them; and the city that had once echoed the shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," resounded to the cry, *Theotokos*, *Theotokos*—"Mother of God!"

On the following day, the decision was officially communicated to Nestorius and to the peoples of Ephesus and Constantinople. Nestorius, with the support of ten bishops, appealed again to the Emperor, and the imperial representative, Candidian, declared the proceedings of the Council void. On the 28th and 29th June, John of Antioch arrived at last, and at the instigation of Candidian, he assembled a *conciliabulum* of forty-three bishops who excommunicated Cyril as a heretic. On Nestorius they were silent. Theodosius, in despair, cried plague on both parties, declaring all the proceedings at Ephesus null, and ordering the bishops to leave the city at once. Cyril, however, conscious of being in the right, waited until the papal legates arrived; and on July 10th a second session of the Council was held in the episcopal residence of Memnon, bishop of Ephesus. The legates brought with them a letter from Celestine instructing the Council to enforce the original papal decision; and when the Acts of the Council were read to them, they pronounced everything canonically in order, and signed

them. This settled the matter. Even if Cyril were precipitate in opening the Council, and he had many excuses, even if there were any irregularity in the first session owing to the absence of the legates, these faults were now remedied. There now remained no doubt of the ecumenicity of the Council; from a dogmatic and canonical point of view, *causa finita est*. Nestorius' cause was lost. In September Theodosius intimated to him that he should retire to a monastery Nestorius returned to his old cell at Euprepios, but he continued to propagate his errors, and in 435 he was exiled to Petra in Arabia. Later he was transferred to the Oasis of Egypt, the prison of criminals and courtiers. Even there he continued his heretical teaching, and there he wrote his last work, the Book of Heraclides. Driven from place to place, either by marauding tribes or by timorous functionaries, the unfortunate heresiarch spent the last years of his life in fitful wanderings. Neither the date nor the manner of his death can be clearly disentangled from the mass of legend which involves his old age. But one thing stands out clearly: he never wavered in the conviction, so strongly expressed in the Book of Heraclides, that he was always in communion with the successor of Peter, the "beloved head of the Romans," as he calls him. At no time did he question the supreme authority of the Pope; on this matter, Nestorius is a genuine witness to the Catholic Faith. But he looked upon Celestine as a pope badly informed, incapable of following theological subtleties, and dazzled by the brilliance and the sophistry of "the Egyptian." He looked upon himself as a new Chrysostom persecuted by a new Theophilus; and in the closing chapters of the Book of Heraclides he breathes a spirit of resignation and of charity (except for Cyril) which seems genuine, so that while we have nothing but gratitude to the great St. Cyril for his strong and steadfast fight for the purity of the faith, yet we may perhaps, without making of Nestorius a hero of virtue as does Bethune-Baker, be somewhat indulgent to him, especially when we remember that even today, after Nice, after Ephesus, after Chalcedon, we have to pick our steps carefully through Christological terms.

As for Cyril, it is a mistake to think of him as lording it arrogantly in triumph over his foes. From August to October in Ephesus in 431 he was a prisoner of the imperial

soldiery, and even after his vindication and his return to Alexandria he was not truculent with the followers of Nestorius, but generously pardoned them and sought peace with them through the formula of reunion proposed by Theodoret. His conduct with regard to the doctrines of Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia showed that he did not seek a dogmatic controversy if he could, with safety to the Faith, avoid one. Until his death in 444 he played a magnificent part as a vigilant defender of the Faith and pacifier of souls, and truly earned the glorious title of *sphragis tōn paterōn*—"the seal of the fathers—for that precision and clarity with which he defended the orthodox Christology, always the key-stone of the Catholic theological arch. Above all his name claims our reverence and our gratitude, especially this year, for his splendid defence of the dignity of Mary, and for the furtherance of that devotion to the Mother of God which is so dear to the heart of every genuine lover of Jesus Christ.

Religious Discrimination—What Can We Do About It?

REV. GEORGE D. BULL, S.J.

A paper delivered at a seminar of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics, held at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa., on November 2, 1930, under the auspices of the Religious Education Association and the National Conference of Jews and Christians. Reprinted from Religious Education, April, 1931.

I AM one of those Catholics who believe that most of the unfriendliness to things Catholic, which exists amongst us today, is based on misunderstanding.

There is some discrimination, of course, which is rooted in malice; a kind, namely, which appreciates the sincerity and general approach to life of Catholics, and nevertheless deliberately inflicts what offense and injury it can and whenever it can. Sometimes this is for ulterior motives. Politicians, for instance, when victory on any legitimate issue may seem doubtful, are occasionally not above the appeal to religious prejudice; individuals, hard pressed for personal misdeeds, find the cry "Romanism" an effective red herring; and we have not been without men low enough in the scale of human depravity to destroy deliberately the harmony of whole communities for financial gain.

Now, with this type of intolerance we are not and cannot be here concerned. These gentry wish to be bigoted. It is a *sine qua non* of gatherings like ours that we do *not* wish to be so, that we deplore discrimination on the basis of religion alone, that we are alive to its dangers for our civic and social life, that, quite possibly, religious intolerance, more than anything else, contains within itself the germs of our destruction as the most prosperous and materially happy nation on the earth.

Not intolerance, therefore, which is malicious, but intolerance as far as it is the product of misunderstanding, would seem our only concern; and, as far as I can see, no expression of the purpose of this gathering could be more useful than simply to say we are met to try to dissipate to

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In a word, my reply to the second part of our agenda—"What can we do about discrimination?"—is this: let us each try to get at the other's spirit, the thing which transcends the detail of his religion. Having done this, we may or may not possess the key to the readier understanding of the minutiae of his religious outlook; but it is certain that we shall have the key to the appreciation of the sincerity of his life, and this, it seems to me, is the first postulate of toleration.

I propose, then, for my part, to point out some of the things which are latent in the Catholic's outlook, in his

approach to life as a whole; and to illustrate how, lying in the background of all his intercourse with his fellow-citizens, they become the breeding-ground of misunderstanding.

Catholicism is not merely a creed: it is a culture. I mean that it is not merely a set of propositions which have to do with religion directly and in the strict sense of the word, but it is an attitude toward life as a whole. If a man is a Catholic, he is so not merely on Sunday, nor when in church, nor when giving his ideas about such things as the Pope or the Bible, the Mass or Salvation or Christ; but also when he is discussing Homer or Dante or Oscar Wilde, or when he is building a cathedral or attending the opera or buying stocks. In a word, there is no activity into which the spontaneous reactions, which are peculiar to him because he is a Catholic, do not come.

Now, this was always true. But what was not always true, but is true today and is one of the greatest causes of misunderstanding, is the fact that Catholicism as a culture is no more the culture of the world than as a religion it is the religion of the modern world.

When Christendom first split into sections and men disagreed, they did so against a common background. Catholic and Calvinist (let us say) quarreled, in the beginning, over particular points of doctrine or practice; but the things they took for granted about life as a whole were the same. Henry VIII or Martin Luther could not be said to be holding the religion of Rome; but certainly theirs was the culture of Rome,—the Rome, I mean, which for centuries had dominated all the living of the Western world.

But this condition of things has changed. Catholic and non-Catholic today do not differ on the details of dogma; they differ on life. And, I think, failure to recognize that the Reformation ushered in a new culture, as well as a new religion, is one of the big sources of misconception today.

Now, nowhere in the Western world is this cleavage of the two cultures more clear and complete than in our own land, for nowhere was the opportunity for untrammelled growth, for expansion, unmodified by the previously existing culture, so complete and free as it was in the New World. Those who had broken with the old tradition and had come to America found here a virgin soil, not only figuratively

but literally. Those who had broken with that tradition and had remained at home could expand and grow only in an environment already preempted by the habits of thought and the material symbols of the dominant civilization. *Here* they could erect their meeting-house beneath nature's full sky and the benevolent trees; *there* they must perforce build beneath the shadow of the spires and arches of the Gothic cathedral.

The result has been, in our land especially, that a whole new point of view has evolved. Things which were in the background of human thought for centuries are no longer there; the "modern" mind is not the Catholic mind—in the sense that all the principal well-springs of its reaction to life are different.

It is comparatively easy to realize that Catholicism in the Middle Ages was a culture and not merely a creed, for it has left the embodiment of its views of life in its own distinctive art, its own distinctive literature, its own philosophy, its own architecture. Dante and Fra Angelico, Chartres and Rheims, only body forth in the realm of the esthetic, in the spontaneous reaction of the artist, that same fundamental approach to life which Aquinas couched in the explicit affirmations of the syllogism; and these creations, whether of beauty or of pure intellect, were but the lives of the men of that day, from the lowest to the loftiest, refracted through the medium of genius. But what is not easy to realize is that that attitude toward life is to be found in our midst today. It is not easy to remember that twenty million Americans hold in the twentieth century substantially the view of life which Dante or Francis of Assisi held; that, in consequence, many of the spontaneous reactions of Catholics today to the life around them are motivated pretty much as those of Anselm might have been or of Bonaventure or of Abelard. I do not mean, of course, that there is no difference at all, but only that there is no difference regarding the fundamental values of life and no difference in the things which are assumed and acted upon without reflection in the daily routine, precisely because of those fundamental values.

Now, it would carry me too far afield to try to enumerate in detail what those things are. But there are two traits of the Catholic attitude toward life to which I should like to

draw special attention, because I believe that not only do they beget misunderstanding between Americans who are Catholics and those who are not, but that they are the prime reasons why Catholics *cannot get themselves understood* in the modern world. Those two traits are totality of view regarding life and "other-worldliness."

Now, as for the first quality—totality of outlook—I do not think anyone who has even a casual acquaintance with Catholicism will have any difficulty in accepting it as characteristic. I said, a few moments ago, that the twentieth-century Catholic looks out on the world today very much as did his fathers of the Middle Ages. And writers are never done telling us that unity and totality were the marks, not only of medieval thought, but of medieval life.

There was one system of education for princes, lords and clerks; one sacred and learned language, the Latin; one code of morals; one ritual; one hierarchy, the Church; one faith and one common interest against heathendom and against Islam; one community on earth and in heaven,—and one system of feudal habits for the whole West.

Now, if that unity and totality have passed from the civilization in which we now live, they have not passed from Catholic thinking on the fundamentals of existence. Catholics still believe that every sphere of human life is related essentially to every other; and that in the conscious and deliberate activity of man there is no action which can be evaluated as an absolute entity,—isolated, that is, from the central fact of man's relation to the rest of the universe. Catholics still look out upon the world and find it ordered according to the principles of theocentric realism. And because this evaluation—this reference of all human activities to the whole under which, for Catholics, life is organized,—is nearly always implicit and spontaneous, this very tendency to totality sets the Catholic at odds with the whole modern outlook on life.

For it is clear, I think, that modern thought, like modern life, is departmentalized. Our institutions in this respect only reflect our thoughts. The dominant ideal is separation—separation of Church and State, separation of religion and education, of science and philosophy, even of religion and morality. And what is true of the world that modern man has made is also true within the microcosm of modern man

himself. He tries to live as though his social nature were one thing and his individual nature another; as though his life were set like concrete in so many moulds; as though there were compartments for his thoughts, his emotions, his actions, like the divisions in his desk or safe. He seems to think he can separate his theory from his practice, his physics from his metaphysics, and make a cleavage between his life as a father of a family, as a business man or a public official and his life simply as a human being.

Each activity (as Mr. Lippmann tells us) has its own ideal, indeed a succession of ideals—for there is no ideal which unites them all and sets them in order. Each ideal is supreme within a sphere of its own. There is no point of reference outside, which can determine the relative value of competing ideals. The modern man desires health, he desires money, he desires power, beauty, love, truth, but which he shall desire the most, since he cannot pursue them all to their logical conclusion, he no longer has any means of deciding. His impulses are no longer parts of one attitude towards life; his ideals are no longer in a hierarchy under one lordly ideal. They have been differentiated, they are free and they are incommensurable.

We have, then, the antithesis of totality versus sectionalism or departmentalization, in the outlook on life. We have also the antithesis of other-worldliness versus worldliness.

Now, I should like to say (to avoid a misconception at this point) that in mentioning "other-worldliness" as a mark of the Catholic attitude toward life, I do not mean to say that Catholics alone believe in a world to come. But I think I am safe in saying that, as compared with the modern culture, the idea of the other world looms larger in the Catholic view and makes its presence felt in a greater number of spheres; in a word, receives, on the whole, greater emphasis. It seems to me, as I try to analyze casual experience of the culture in which we live today, that non-Catholics are affected to a large extent by the very lack of that orientation to life which I mentioned just above. It seems, in other words, that the non-Catholic attitude is something to this effect: "We are sure of what we have. We are not sure (not *so* sure, at any rate) of what is to come. Let us appreciate the present, then, while we have it. Doubtless there is another world, but let us make this one a better place to live in"; whereas the Catholic view is that the

thing of ultimate importance is not here, but hereafter, and in fact that this world has genuine value only in so far as it leads to the next.

Now, this is a very inadequate view of the great divergence in the attitude with which Catholics and non-Catholics face the modern world. But I think, sketchy as it is, it will suffice to indicate how it is that Catholics and non-Catholics come so frequently to misunderstand each other,—or rather, why it is that Catholics must appear (as I think they do) to their non-Catholic fellow-citizens inert and apathetic in certain forms of civil endeavor; callous to certain social needs; unenthusiastic about this or that “latest movement” in sociology; reactionary, strange, foreign, even dangerous to modern life and thought.

Let me illustrate by taking instances from one or more of the areas of conflict between Catholicism and the modern world.

There is, to begin with, the question of education. Catholics insist upon their own schools. They segregate, as Mr. Marshall (rather unfairly, I think) expresses it, thousands of future American citizens during the formative years of life. There is a great public school system with which, so far as possible, they will have no part. Of university education the same is true. They have, at the moment, an extensive autonomous system of their own; and in general they try to bring it about that Catholics will be out of contact with the great American university centers of American culture. Why is it that they will not use these great instruments of nationality solidarity, agreeing where they can, frankly agreeing to differ where they cannot?

I am not concerned here to give the reply, but only to illustrate the attitude toward life from which that answer will spring. It may be wrong to take it for granted that life cannot be departmentalized; that postulate may be false (though, of course, being what I am, I am sure that it is not). But this surely is true: that if totality of outlook is fundamental in my view of life, I am but rational in rejecting an educational system which is built on the assumption that religion and education need not go hand in hand. And yet, in all the discussion that might arise between Catholic and non-Catholic, it is quite possible that this fundamental difference of attitude might go unperceived and, go-

ing unperceived, deprive me, not of the ability to make you see my doctrine on education, but to see my sincerity in holding an opinion which is the only one I can hold consistently with the culture in which I have been bred.

It is but a casual instance of one of the disadvantages under which totality of view must labor when dealing with a culture which is concerned only with an immediate and isolated truth. In different ages the non-Catholic culture may accept at face value different and even contradictory ideas, precisely because they are in isolation from each other. Today, for instance, it is harder to explain to non-Catholics the Catholic attitude on education than it was in the sixteenth century, because today different things are in the background of the non-Catholic mind. In a world which was highly religious (even if erroneously so) you did not have to *prove* that religion should dominate education. In a world which limits its religion to a department, the general *idea* of religion has first to be proved.

Now, what happens when Catholics and non-Catholics try to understand each other in the matter of education happens in practically all the areas of major contact in our daily lives and for the same reason. We approach the subject with different things taken for granted; not necessarily different explicit postulates, though this is frequently true, but different attitudes. And *these attitudes are not mutually perceived*,—all that is said and done is said and done against different settings and so understanding is far away.

Mr. Stephen Leacock tells us that "a half-truth, like a half-brick, is always more forcible as an argument than a whole one. It carries further." Perhaps I might take the statement as roughly descriptive of what happens when a man with a tendency to totality of view tries to explain to a man who is only interested in the departments of life. Like the half-brick, sectioned truth not only carries further in an argument; it is easier to handle!

The difficulty increases when we remember that the Catholic tendency is not only to measure each activity of life by its relation to the whole, but to count as important not so much this world as the world which is to come. I think we are all pretty much agreed as to what this word "other-worldliness" means; and also, perhaps, that it is the genuine antithesis to the whole spirit of modernity. But I

doubt whether we could exaggerate the ubiquity of this antithesis and its power to set Catholic and non-Catholic at odds, especially in civic and social relations. Let me take but one illustration—the question of birth-control.

Perhaps nothing that Catholicism teaches has so marked her out for the modern eye as reactionary, cruel, deaf to the call of social progress and the conclusions of science, as her stand on this subject. Bertrand Russell sounds the warning for modernity, and I think he sounds it in modernity's tone, when he says: "Catholics will go on in spite of everything, believing impertubably that birth-control leads to hell fire, and so we are in a fair way to surrender the earth to idiots, imbeciles and Roman Catholics."

Now, once again let me say, it is not my intention to tell you why Catholics believe that under no conceivable circumstances is positive interference with conception morally justifiable. I wish only to show how in this, as in another casual instance, the clash between the Catholic and the modern view is fundamentally an antithesis between two whole attitudes toward life.

The matter is simple and need not delay us long. The assumption in the vast majority of arguments for birth-control is always some good realizable here on earth. It may be a better race; it may be prevention of poverty, disease or any other form of human misery; and the thing most noticeable about the most earnest and sincere of the protagonists of contraception is their whole-hearted surrender to the assumption that all these things are not merely evils, but that they are unmitigated and absolute evils, the abolition of which could not but be worth the complete devotion of the most noble lives.

Over against this assumption there is the Catholic one: that the only absolute and unmitigated evil in the world is sin. The Catholic is certain that a single mortal sin, committed in private, far away from all the haunts of men,—a mortal sin even of thought alone,—is an incomparably greater evil than the vitiation of a whole race by inherited disease, the idiocy or imbecility of all the misery which war, pestilence and famine could bring in their train. Besides this, or rather because of it, he can look upon human misery from another angle. He is as anxious as anyone that, in general, it should be ameliorated or even abolished

from the earth. But for him its abolition constitutes no categorical imperative. He is wont to think that life at its longest is short; and suffering may be made a coin which will pass current in a world much better than this one!

With such assumptions on either side, it is not hard to see how misunderstanding will arise. The Catholic must inevitably appear as hopelessly callous, unmerciful, without civic or social interests. He appears to the modern as tenacious of an attitude regarding contraception which may have fitted some less complex civilization, some bygone age; while he himself believes that that attitude is ageless, that it transcends time and is rooted in eternity. The modern will go on multiplying reasons to show that birth-control will aid temporal happiness. And the Catholic goes on thinking first of eternal happiness. In a word, the common argument for birth-control has a force and power for the modern mind which it does not have for the Catholic mind. And the ultimate reason is an antithesis,—the antithesis between worldliness (in the unobnoxious sense) and "other-worldliness." And as this is an attitude, something taken for granted on either side and usually unperceived, it begets misunderstanding.

And this is the point which I really wish to make: You may or may not agree with my reasons for standing on the wrong side of what, in your eyes, is a great social question. But if you know of the trait in my general outlook on life, you will not declare, as a learned profesor did some time ago, that the Catholic position on birth-control is mere "medieval fatheadism." You may disagree with my premises, but you will know they are premises and not prejudices. You will realize, perhaps, that I am not consciously tied to a superstition; that I have tried, at least, to rationalize my position; that in my own mind, at least, it is part of a general scheme of life. And realization of things like this may make it easier to be tolerant.

This, then, I submit as my reply to our question: "What can we do about discrimination?" I have tried to say that, in my opinion, we get furthest when we try to make allowances for the whole culture or attitude toward life in which those around us have been reared. I have tried to say, quite frankly, that, as far as Catholics are concerned, that culture is fundamentally the antithesis of the culture of the modern

world; that this is implicit in our daily intercourse with our fellow-Americans; that it governs many of our impulses and reactions to modern social and civic problems. And I have tried to illustrate, casually, how it operates to bring about misunderstanding between Americans who are Catholics and those who are not.

We know upon what little things misconception may sometimes turn. I can come to like or dislike a man merely from the poise of his head or the manner of his walk. I once heard Major General Sir Frederick Maurice tell a group of American students at Cambridge University that during the war he had found American soldiers definitely at odds with English soldiers because, as one chap expressed it, "them fellers drinks tea!"

There was a time when historians were almost generally agreed that the Middle Ages were the dark ages. That time is past; it is no longer fashionable, much less scientific, to treat that great civilization with contempt. The change came when that culture was studied as a whole; when items like the Inquisition and the *Unam sanctam* were taken in conjunction with, not isolated from, the cathedrals and the Crusades. I wonder if it would be stretching an analogy too far to predict that items like Catholic education, or birth-control, if juxtaposed in men's minds with Catholic teaching on purity or marriage or the necessity of obedience to duly constituted civil authority, might not yield a similar appreciation of the twentieth-century Catholic's approach to life, might not make us seem less reactionary, less a stumbling block in the way of social progress, less dangerous to modern ways and men?

There is a story told of Goethe, the poet. Day after day he had passed the cathedral at Strasbourg, his poet's eye blind to that glorious beauty. He had been reared in the tradition that Gothic was barbarous. But one day he went within, and, as he says himself, "I seemed suddenly to see a new revelation; . . . the vision of beauty was given my soul." Goethe had been educated among the detractors of Gothic. It was only when he went within that he knew. The same is true of all of us; only when we go within can we know that beneath the infinite complexity of modern human life there is always something to scale down our surest prejudices, and to make us tolerant.